Instructional control of human operant behavior.
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AB Reviews and interprets experiments in which instructions modified human responding to schedules of reinforcement. Findings that instructions exert strong control over operant behavior, even to the extent of overriding control by the actual schedule, are interpreted not as a limitation of reinforcement control of human behavior, but as instances of reinforcement histories influencing current behaviors. The status of instructions as discriminative stimuli is considered and some similarities of instruction-following to generalized imitation noted. As an alternative to cognitive and mediational accounts of instructional control, a view is proposed in terms of interactions between 2 response classes: responses engendered by instructions, the "instruction response" of W. M. Schoenfeld and W. W. Cumming (1963), and responses evoked by the actual schedule contingencies. Behavioral outcomes depend on the extent to which following of instructions maximizes reinforcement available through the schedules.